

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

At present, gender equality has been fought a lot for this second. Even in Indonesia itself, the growth of feminist activism in the digital space gives the impression that this movement is exceptional. Even when there is a global campaign “*Women’s March*” helped encourage Indonesian feminist fighters to build alliances and attract support to the public. Which could gather several 4,000 participants in Jakarta at the end of April 2019. This was used to urge the Indonesian Parliament to pass the PKS Bill. Even so, there are still some people who misinterpret this feminism movement as something that will damage the ‘social system of society’. Feminism is a recognition of the imbalance of power between women and men, which is placed in a lower role (Hannam, 2007). According to Martin (1916), the essence of feminism is highlighting freedom, independence, and emancipation or equality between women and men in all aspects, such as; social, political, and economic.

Feminism emerged as a resistance movement against patriarchal society. Bhasin explains that male power; power relations with what men dominate women, and to say the system that dominates women is still controlled through various ways. Patriarchy forms men as superordinates in the framework of relations with women who are made as subordinates.

An essay written by Mary Wollstonecraft as a pioneer of the liberal feminism movement contains the French bourgeois revolution and the rights of women as human beings whose rights must be fulfilled as the spirit of the French Revolution demands individualism from the absolute monarchy of France. As Naomi Wolf did as one of the feminist figures she is journalist, “*Strength Feminism*” is a solution. Now women have the power in terms of education and income, and women must continue to demand equal rights and now is the time for women to have free will without depending on men. According to Mackie (2003), argues that a form of social policy for women is needed to achieve independence without having to sacrifice their reproductive role and some are engaged in campaigns about women’s suffrage. This situation then gave rise to the next flow, namely Marxist feminism. This feminism

focuses on issues of production and reproduction, that there is an unfair gender division of labor, and women are considered as mothers who carry out social reproduction which is not seen as work while men work in offices and have the right to be educated more than women. Then there is radical Feminism which is motivated by dissatisfaction with Marxist feminist analysis because according to them, women's oppression occurs because of women's bodies. And they want to abolish the patriarchal system that existed in society at that time.

"*Little women*", is one of the classic stories that tell about gender equality in its time. A struggle to live free like a man. Because women of their time have many such rules, they must be like a *lady* who is sweet and does not talk too much. In this novel, the writer makes Jo's character show her freedom. Seen from the stature, her behavior is like a man and also there is no desire for her to get married. And lastly when she cut her hair for her mother's where to a trip to Washington. Make her appearance like a man. Even though she ended up crying at night when she slept. Jo's character, giving similarities to the writer, because even until the end of her life, Alcott never married. Because she continues to uphold her principles, women should have the right to their way of life, including marriage or not.

Louisa May Alcott was born in Germantown, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, United States, on November 29, 1832. She was a poet and writer quite well known in America. *Little Women* is a novel she wrote during the American warden war, and it is based on real experiences in her life together with three siblings; Anna, May, and Elizabeth Alcott. When her family's financial condition was not good, requiring her to work as a household assistant when she lived in Massachusetts. She also worked as a teacher from 1850-1862. During the civil war, she became a nurse in Washington D.C. At first, Alcott was reluctant and did not purpose go up to write stories about women, except about her sister. Even though she finally wrote whatever she knew; about a family of four daughters who grew up to be themselves. In addition to this novel, Alcott has also made various other works such as "*The Hospital Sketches*", "*Atlantic Monthly*" and "*Lady's Companion*". Then she helped make novels and short stories about young people taken from her own family's life experiences. Such as; "*Little Women*" (1868), "*Good Wives*" (1869), "*Little Men*" (1871), "*Eight Cousins*"

(1875), *“Work”* (1873), *“A Modern Mephistopheles”* (1877), *“Jo Boys”* (1886). Alcott died in 1888 in Boston, Massachusetts, United State

Not only in the realm of books, this one has been adapted as an opera, film, animation, musical drama, TV series, and so on. This novel gives an example that maybe women can still get a simple, modest, and quality life. So that, this novel is much in demand by people who even ask for their closing stories because they feel this story is still hanging. Until finally made a sequel titled *“Good Wives”* which was published the following year.

The novel was preceded by four sisters who were celebrating Christmas very gray because they were left behind by their father in a civil war. They are the oldest Meg, Jo, Beth, and a little Amy. They lived six of them with their mother and maid, Hannah, who had taken care of this family since the children were young. These four siblings each have a different dream. They also often mocked each other and mocked each other even though they finally made it back. Because after all they still love each other. They have a mother who called Marmee was very wise and responsible for the household after being left by her husband Mr. March went to civil war. In addition, they also have a male friend who lives with his grandfather who also became her next-door neighbor. His named was Theodore (Laurie) Lawrence was the same age as Jo and his grandfather named James Lawrence. Laurie and Jo are very compact friends in doing something unique and absurd things. Though initially Laurie was a lonely rich kid and was always told by his grandfather to spend time studying until he was bored. Before finally, he got to know his four sister neighbors and his life was cheerful again.

March family life was filled with joy as well as other normal family life. But all of that gradually subsided when they received a letter if Mr. March, their father was seriously ill. Then, her mother inevitably had to go to Washington to care for her husband. Not stopping there, the shy Beth also fell ill from contracting her poor neighbor. Making Beth lying on the bed for days. This makes Amy must be evacuated to her aunt’s house and Meg as the oldest and Jo who is close to Beth and Hannah take turns looking after Beth. Even their wealthy neighbors help them meet their needs. All that they did was until their mother returned home.

Various up and down problems in this little family, finally they can all get back together as usual. And the four sisters enjoyed their youth before one of them married or went to explore.

The novel raises the issue of feminism, illustrated through Jo's figure who is independent and always moves according to what she wants, she opposed all the rules that limit her freedom. With neat packaging to make many people interested to read it. Then made a novel that was first published in 1868 as many as more than 2000 copies were sold very quickly. And received a positive response from literary critics. And proven to be a best-selling novel and read from generation to generation. According to Suharsimi Arkunto (2009), assessment is to decide with good and bad measures that are qualitative. In this case, certainly many good assessments for this novel such as writing that seemed to bring the reader drifted into the story as if she was feeling like in the past. But some parts are a little boring. But it does not make this novel bad.

The story of four sisters becomes the main attraction of this novel, so the researcher wants to study this work. In addition, the characters in this novel are very interesting. Those who are never lazy or those who always work together to do something even when they are trying to make their dreams come true. And they also want to work like men and have freedom. It also has to do with the present, where women can work as they do. In this case, it shows the issue of feminism in the novel.

With the explanation above, the researcher is interested in studying feminism in the novel *Little Women*. The researcher wants to study more about the characters and issues of feminism in this novel. So the researcher gave the title for this research; "AN ANALYSIS OF THE MAIN CHARACTER IN THE *LITTLE WOMEN* NOVEL BY LOUISA MAY ALCOTT; A FEMINIST APPROACH."

1.2 Problem Statement

The problem of the study is how to know feminism is reflected in the novel. The problem of the study is dissected further into the following research questions.

1. What types of feminism are reflected in the novel?

2. Why does Jo's character want to have freedom like a man?
3. How does the writer show the issue of feminism in the novel?

1.3 Objectives Of Study

The objectives of the study are as follows.

1. To identify the types of feminism in the novel.
2. To reveal the reason why Jo's character wants to have freedom like men.
3. To know the issue of feminism in the novel.

1.4 Significance Of Study

This research has practical significance. In its practical significance, this research can be of benefit to readers. Namely, so can they understand feminism that is applied in the characters in the Little Women novel by Louisa May Alcott. Especially for students who for all intents want to pursue a career and show that not only men can work and get married but women can do it too. The same thing is done by the characters in this novel.